

## To the inhabitants of King's County

To the Inhabitants of KING'S COUNTY.

FRIENDS and FELLOW-CITIZENS,

**YOU** were addressed a few days since, in *Dutch*, by a person under the signature of *A King's County Farmer*, intended as a reply, to a publication of mine, to you on the 23d day of March. I will not insult your understanding, by addressing you in the same language, as I well know you all can read English. The author prefaces his address with a dirty attack upon my character—he has done it in a language, which no man who respects character would have done; it is, however, a sure proof of his having engaged in a bad cause—men who cannot oppose argument to argument, almost always, descend to low attacks, on the character of their adversary. I will not, however, condescend to take any further notice of that part of his pitiful performance, but pass it by with contempt, and proceed to examine his objections to the *New Federal Constitution*. —This trifling opponent to the Constitution, acknowledges, that you will not be compelled to receive State paper money in payment of your debts, but says you will be obliged to receive Continental paper money; no person possessing a particle of understanding, who will take the pains to read the Constitution, but must acknowledge that it declares that nothing but gold and silver coin shall be a tender in payment of debts. He goes on and tells you, if you have a debt due to you in another State, that you will be obliged to bring suit against your debtor in the Federal Court, and that you may perhaps be compelled to travel some hundreds of miles to accomplish your business ;—Of all the stupid assertions that I have met with against the Constitution, this exceeds. The truth, my fellow citizens, is, if a man is indebted to you who lives in another State, you can, as you now may do, institute your suit in the courts of the State where the person resides, if you chose so to do. But should you think that you as a stranger in another State would not have equal justice done you, by instituting your suit in a State Court, you will then have it in your power to bring your suit in the Federal Court.

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This will be optionary with yourselves, and not compulsory, as this *nominal* King's County Farmer asserts. To establish some of his doctrines, he has, in repeated instances, quoted the sacred scriptures; with what degree of propriety, I shall leave to you to determine;—My opinion is, the scripture ought never to be introduced by such a foul scribbler as he is. This *allwise* farmer proceeds to tell you, what you all know, that you received certificates from the commissary for boarding the American prisoners, which certificates have none of them been paid—I can, without the gift of prophecy, tell you, that unless the New Constitution is adopted, not one farthing of it ever will be paid. From whence is the money to come? Congress make requisitions on the several States for monies, for the purpose of paying their debts; one or two of the States, in some measure, comply with the requisitions of Congress, some others very partially, and other not all; are Congress therefore to be blamed for not paying their debts?—Who can pay his debts without money? This four eyed farmer contrasts the punctuality of Congress with that of this State; he says many of *us* loaned money during the war to the State, and that the State has punctually paid both principle and interest. The State by an unjust *partial tax*, takes your money first from you, and then pays you what she owes you; this is much to the credit of the State to be sure. If the State had done justice to this County, after it had laid the *partial tax*, she would have applied the money to the payment of the prisoners board, and have charged Congress with it.—About two years ago the Legislature of this State passed an act directing the Treasurer to issue Interest Certificates, which they pledged themselves to pay in one year. Has this been done? I assert not.—The State, therefore, you see, can violate promises, as well as Congress. This double sighted politician goes on to tell you, that no person will dispute that Congress ought to have the regulation of trade. The very party in this State which now opposes the New Constitution, are the very men, who two years ago, prevented the Congress from having the regulation of the commerce of this country; and you may rely on it, they will be opposed to any thing, or any plan of government, which is likely to lessen their consequence and power, or too diminish their exorbitant salaries. He also tells you, that it was for the regulating trade, that the Convention sat at Philadelphia —This is an untruth. The Convention who met at Annapolis two years ago were sent

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to regulate commerce; they did nothing with the business, but reported to the different States the impropriety of merely regulating trade, and recommended a new Convention to be called, with full powers, to correct the defects of the Confederation;—and these powers were given to the convention who sat at Philadelphia:—And this Constitution is the product of these powers. He has also in that instance attempted grosly to deceive you. This consummate politician, intreats you in repeated instances to read the Constitution, and judge for yourselves; at the same time strives with all *his* abilities, by false assertions, to prejudice your minds against it. I sincerely join with him in wishing that you may all read it. I have read it repeatedly, and honestly confess, that every time I read it, I think it more perfect than I before believed it to be. This King's County Farmer, as *he* styles himself, has thrown out a great many bug bear tales against the Constitution, without offering arguments to support what he asserts. He tells you that the President will have more power than many Princes in Europe;—The President has not, in many instances, as much power as the Governor of this State. He tells you also, that the President has the power to call out the Militia, when, and how he pleases; this is not a fact. The power of calling out the Militia is vested in Congress:—Congress ought to have the power of calling out the Militia in cases of invasions or insurrections; for instance, if our State was to be invaded by a numerous enemy, too powerful for our Militia to oppose, ought not Congress to have power to call on the Militia of the other States to assist us? Surely they ought: Or are we to be destroyed because we have not force sufficient to drive the enemy from amongst us? This is the monstrous power which the Congress have over the Militia, and which this man relates such frightful tales about.—The Governor of this State has more power over the Militia of the State, than the President will have over the militia of the United States. These are mere tales asserted with an intention to wheedle you into an opposition to a Constitution, on the adoption of which, the peace, happiness, and prosperity of our country depends. This King's County Farmer tells you, that the expences of the government of this State will not be lessened, should the New Constitution take place; I assert that the expences of the government of this State will be lessened—that the Legislature of this State, instead of sitting three or four months in the year, will not have business to keep

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them more than as many weeks; this therefore will lessen the expences of the State government, at least three thousand pounds a year. Besides this, the expences of the State will be lessened in many other instances. He talks to you about being obliged to pay the President, Vice-President, Judges of the Supreme and Inferior Courts, &c. &c. I would ask this man, whether we do not under the present confederation pay a President of Congress, Judges or Courts of Admiralty, and a long list of other necessary officers. The New Constitution only changes the title of these officers, and not their salaries. He proceeds on, and informs you, that congress will tax your meat, liquors, clothing, beds and all other property; these assertions are very easily made, and I believe are as easily refuted. I do believe that the commerce of this country, under the regulations of the New Federal Constitution, will be so extensive, and so advantageous, that the revenue arising therefrom, will be fully adequate to the exigencies of that government. This wise man also tells you, that he has not lately met with one man of understanding who does not allow that the New constitution has defects, and wants amendments. I believe there is no government under the Sun that is not more or less defective; and we cannot expect to arrive at a state of perfection:—And I further believe that this New Constitution is a little defective as any one whatever; and an ample provision is made in it for correcting of defects, whenever experience teaches us it contains any. When you construct a machine, it is impossible to know how it will work exactly, until it is put in motion. Thus, my fellow citizens, I have gone through this man's long, stupid performance, and I hope have satisfactorily answered all the objections he has made to the New Constitution; and I sincerely invite you to join with me in putting into Convention men, who we know are firmly in favor of it. As to the propriety of the assertions, which he had made against my character, I shall leave entirely with you to determine. That health, happiness and prosperity may ever attend you, is the sincere wish of **A FLAT-BUSH FARMER**. *Flat-Bush, 21st April, 1788.*

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